

## Message Text

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ORIGIN ARA-20

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DRAFTED BY ARA/CEN DAVID LAZAR:TLK

8/6/73 29362

APPROVED BY ARA/CEN DAVID LAZAR

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R 061617Z AUG 73

FM SECSTATE WASHDC

TO AMEMBASSY GUATEMALA

C O N F I D E N T I A L STATE 154348

E.O. 11652:GDS

TAGS: PINT, GT

SUBJECT: REMARKS OF AMBASSADOR ASENSIO RE CANDIDACY OF  
GENERAL PERALTA, AND OTHER MATTERS

1. IN THE COURSE OF A VISIT TO CEN DIRECTOR LAZAR ON AUG 3,  
AFTER DISCUSSING SEVERAL ROUTINE MATTERS (WHICH WILL BE  
THE SUBJECT OF SEPARATE COMMUNICATIONS) AMBASSADOR ASENSIO  
CAME TO WHAT HE STRESSED WAS THE REAL POINT OF HIS VISIT.  
HE SAID THAT GENERAL ENRIQUE PERALTA HAD BEEN SPREADING  
THE WORD AROUND GUATEMALA THAT HE QUOTE HAD THE BLESSINGS  
OF WASHINGTON UNQUOTE FOR HIS PRESIDENTIAL CANDIDACY. DON  
JULIO THEN ASKED WHETHER WE WOULD HAVE ANY PROBLEM, SHOULD  
HE BE ASKED BY REPORTERS OR FRIENDS IN GUATEMALA, IF HE  
WERE TO SAY THERE WAS NO TRUTH IN THESE REPORTS.

2. LAZAR SAID THIS WAS THE FIRST TIME HE HAD HEARD THAT  
PERALTA WAS SPREADING SUCH ALLEGED RUMORS AND STATED THAT  
THEY OBVIOUSLY HAD NO BASIS IN FACT. ASENSIO ADDED THAT  
IT HAD NOT BEEN HIS INTENTION TO QUOTE ANYONE IN THE DE-  
PARTMENT OR EVEN TO INDICATE THAT HE HAD CHECKED THE  
ALLEGED RUMORS WITH THE DEPARTMENT.

3. HE THEN CAME TO WHAT WE SUSPECT WAS THE REAL POINT OF  
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HIS VISIT AND PROBABLY THE REAL POINT BEHIND HIS RAISING

THE PERALTA STORY. HE MENTIONED THE POSSIBILITY THAT

COLOM ARGUETA MIGHT BE IN WASHINGTON TO TALK TO BID, IN WHICH CASE HE WOULD UNDOUBTEDLY CALL ON CEN. ASENSIO DID NOT, OF COURSE, COUNSEL US ON EITHER THE PROPRIETY OR ADVISEABILITY OF SUCH A MEETING, BUT WITH A VERY FINE, DEFT BRUSH HE PAINTED A POLITICAL PORTRAIT OF COLOM (THE USUAL) THAT COMMUNICATED MUCH MORE THAN MERE VERBAL ADVICE COULD HAVE.

4. ASENSIO, IS RETURNING TO GUATEMALA FOR WHAT HE DESCRIBED AS A VACATION. HE ALSO PASSED ALONG INFORMATION THAT THE DCG IS TRYING TO GET PERALTA TO RUN AS ITS PRESIDENTIAL CANDIDATE WITH DE LEON AS RUNNING MATE. WE TRIED TO IMPRESS ON HIM THAT: (A) WE QUESTIONED THE AUTHENTICITY OF THE RUMOR DESCRIBED IN PARA ONE, AND (B) THE USG WAS REMAINING COMPLETELY NEUTRAL IN THE UPCOMING ELECTION.

5. COLOM WAS IN FACT IN WASHINGTON, AS EMBASSY GUATEMALA IS AWARE, AND MET SOCIALLY THE EVENING OF AUG. 3 WITH MC NEIL, PEZZULLO AND LAZAR. IF DON JULIO WAS AWARE OF THIS ARRANGEMENT, WHICH SEEMS HIGHLY UNLIKELY, HE DIDN'T INDICATE IT.

6. WE WOULD APPRECIATE EMBASSY REPORTING ON HOW THIS IS PLAYED OUT AFTER ASENSIO'S ARRIVAL AS WELL AS INFORMATION WHICH WOULD TEND TO SUBSTANTIATE THE RUMOR THAT PERALTA IS SPREADING THE WORD THAT HE RECEIVED BLESSINGS IN WASHINGTON FOR HIS CANDIDACY. FYI. NO ONE IN THE DEPARTMENT HAS TALKED TO PERALTA IN RECENT YEARS, NOR HAS HE BEEN IN WASHINGTON AS FAR AS WE KNOW.

ROGERS

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